

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOCI, PA

SUBJECT: INDIAN AFFAIRS: INCREASED ACTIVITY TO ASSIST INDIANS

REFS: (A) ASUNCION A-4, JAN 20, 1975

(B) ASUNCION A-21 MARCH 3, 1975

(C) ASUNCION 601

1. DEFENSE MINISTER MARCIAL SAMANIEGO RECENTLY INVITED TWO EMBOFFS TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON A TRIP TO THE INTERIOR WHICH INCLUDED VISITS TO TWO REMOTE INDIAN RESERVATIONS. THE INVITATION WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF A CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD WITH THE AMBASSADOR IN WHICH THE LATTER HAD EMPHASIZED THE KEEN INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE U.S. CONGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS, AND REFLECTED SIMILAR CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE GOP OVER UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE OF ALLEGED ABUSES OF PARAGUAY'S INDIANS.

2. ON MARCH 2, THE DEFENSE MINISTER INAUGURATED A NORWEGIAN-FINANCED HOSPITAL AT YBY-YAU (IN AMAMBAY DEPARTMENT 30 KILOMETERS FROM PEDRO JUAN CABALLERO), THE FIRST IN PARAGUAY DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO SERVE INDIANS. AT THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY SAMANIEGO SAID THE HOSPITAL WAS PROOF THAT, FAR FROM COMMITTING "GENOCIDE" AGAINST INDIANS, THE GOP WAS ACTIVELY TRYING TO ASSIST THEM. TWO DAYS LATER SAMANIEGO

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ATTENDED THE PERFORMANCE OF A DEFENSE MINISTRY MUSICAL

TROUPE FOR THE INDIANS AT YBY-PYTE NATIONAL COLONY (ALSO LOCATED IN AMAMBAY). SAMANIEGO DISTRIBUTED FREE FOOD AND CLOTHING TO THE 200 PAI TAVYTERA INDIANS WHO ATTENDED THE PERFORMANCE AND LISTENED FOR SEVERAL HOURS TO THE INDIANS DESCRIBE THEIR PROBLEMS.

3. MINISTER SAMANIEGO'S ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF PARAGUAY'S INDIANS REPRESENT ONLY A PART OF A RECENT SPATE OF ACTIVITY IN THIS FIELD. ON MARCH 3, PROJECT MARANDU, CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY'S INDIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, OPENED THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF WEEK-LONG TRAINING COURSES FOR INDIAN LEADERS IN THE CHACO. LAST MONTH TWO MEMBERS OF MARANDU'S NEWLY-CREATED GOVERNING COUNCIL, WHICH IS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF INDIANS, ATTENDED A MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN INDIAN LEADERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA; THE GOP HELATH MINISTRY DONATED MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO PROJECT MARANDU; AND GOP OFFICIALS AND CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS CONDUCTED A CAMPAIGN TO REGISTER AND PROVIDE IDENTITY DOCUMENTS TO SEVERAL THOUSAND CHACO INDIANS.
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